

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0209942		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/22/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/06/2002
<b>Decision Date:</b>	02/12/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/24/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	12/15/2014

### HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, has a subspecialty in Rheumatology and is licensed to practice in Maryland. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The patient is a 54 year old female with date of injury 8/6/2002. The mechanism of injury is not stated in the available medical records. The patient has complained of neck pain and low back pain since the date of injury. She has been treated with physical therapy and medications. There are no radiographic reports included for review. Objective: decreased and painful range of motion of the cervical spine, tenderness to palpation of the trapezius musculature bilaterally, decreased and painful range of motion of the lumbar spine, tenderness to palpation of the bilateral lumbar paraspinous musculature. Diagnoses: spondylolisthesis, cervical spine degenerative joint disease, lumbar spine degenerative joint disease, chronic pain syndrome. Treatment plan and request: Norco, Soma.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

**Norco 10-325mg #180:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Norco; Short-acting Opioids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use Page(s): 76-85, 88-89.

**Decision rationale:** This 54 year old female has complained of neck pain and low back pain since date of injury 8/6/2002. She has been treated with physical therapy and medications to include opioids since at least 07/2014. The current request is for Norco. No treating physician reports adequately assess the patient with respect to function, specific benefit, return to work, signs of abuse or treatment alternatives other than opioids. There is no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids according to the MTUS section cited above which recommends prescribing according to function, with specific functional goals, return to work, random drug testing, opioid contract and documentation of failure of prior non-opioid therapy. On the basis of this lack of documentation and failure to adhere to the MTUS guidelines, Norco is not indicated as medically necessary.

**Soma 350mg #60:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Carisoprodol (Soma). Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Physicians and American College of Pain Physicians

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Carisoprodol Page(s): 29.

**Decision rationale:** This 54 year old female has complained of neck pain and low back pain since date of injury 8/6/2002. She has been treated with physical therapy and medications to include opioids since at least 07/2014. The current request is for Soma. Per the MTUS guideline cited above, Carisoprodol, a muscle relaxant, is not recommended, and if used, should be used only on a short term basis (4 weeks or less). On the basis of the MTUS guidelines and available medical documentation, Carisoprodol is not indicated as medically necessary.